

Go4-Joint Final Conference –“Responsible Research and Innovation in Europe and across the World”

By Antonina Khodzhaevaⁱ

On 14-15 January 2016, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) hosted the joint final event of 4 European projects, all working with the concept of RRI. The conference aimed to highlight work undertaken by the EESC and the GO4 projects' Consortiums and stimulate debate between representatives of the main stakeholder groups involved in research and innovation. The 4 projects presented their findings, conceptual developments, concrete messages and policy recommendations.

The GREAT-project aimed at developing an empirically based and theoretically sound model of the role of responsible research and innovation governance. The main goal of ProGReSS was to promote a European approach to Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) through a global network. RESPONSIBILITY project aimed at developing a virtual observatory for enhancing the interaction among research outcomes and policy making. The Res-AGorA project (Responsible Research and Innovation in a Distributed Anticipatory Governance Frame. A Constructive Socio-normative Approach) was working on development of a normative and comprehensive governance framework for RRI.

The four projects covered a wide variety of issues, which was reflected in the program and contents of sessions during the conference: governance, EU policy-making landscape, role of industry, global perspectives, and evaluation. Several interesting discussions emerged during the open space session, in which agenda and topics for discussions were defined by participants themselves. Topics tackled during the open sessions concerned: RRI in the real world, the global impact of RRI, de-growth movement, restructuring research system. For example, in one of the sessions the need for more (funding) mechanisms that could incentivize more international collaborations was discussed. For some institutions it is still a challenge to bring researchers from other countries, especially regarding research collaborations between global North and global South. Also the need to distinguish between impact and excellence of science and



research was discussed: The impact of citizen science, for instance, can be high in terms of engaging broader publics, but the quality of the results is not guaranteed.

Define responsibility and make RRI practical

Three main conclusions were drawn during the final session of the conference. First of all, we need to flesh out the concept of “responsibility”: “people tend to not want to unpack the word responsibility”. Secondly, RRI is still a theoretical and philosophical concept, rather than practical, and there is a strong need to operationalize the concept and make it very practical. Apart from more industry involvement in this process, the research process should undergo a reality check. Lastly the need to make the projects’ results sustainable in the long-term was highlighted.

Takeaways for Synenergene

- There is a need to define the concept of the responsibility in different context (social, political, economical) and what it means for different stakeholders;
- Key to implementation of the RRI concept is engagement with society including various stakeholders (industry, research, civil society, policy);
- Pay attention to the sustainability of the project outcomes.

Programme and presentations are available [here](#).

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